

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4598

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 06331

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: ELECTION AFTERMATH: LABAN TO PRESS FOR AN

- INVESTIGATION OF ELECTORAL FRAUD

1. AT A DINNER APRIL 18 ATTENDED BY POL COUNSELOR, LABAN CANDIDATE AND FORMER EDUCATION SECRETARY ALEJANDRO ROCES HELD FORTH ON THE RECENT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND THE CURRENT LABAN POSTURE. ROCES WAS IN FIGHTING SPIRIT. HE WENT THROUGH THE NOW FAMILIAR LITANY OF ELECTION DAY CHEATING AND ASSERTED THAT, IN AN HONEST CONTEST, LABAN WOULD HAVE CAPTURED 80 PERCENT OF THE METRO MANILA VOTE INSTEAD OF THE 41 PERCENT ANNOUNCED BY COMELEC.

2. ROCES ADDED THAT LABAN WOULD LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST WITH COMELEC WITH A VIEW TO HAVING EVERY BALLOT BOX OPENED, IF NECESSARY, AND THE BALLOTS, TABULATIONS AND REGISTRATION LISTS SCRUTINIZED FOR FRAUD. LEGAL ACTION WOULD BE BROUGHT AGAINST THE TEACHERS (POLLING SUPERVISORS) WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN MANIPULATION. INFORMED BY A COMELEC OFFICIAL THAT IT WOULD COST 50 PESOS EACH TO OPEN UP BALLOT BOXES, HE NOTED THAT LABAN COULD READILY RAISE THE MONEY THROUGH PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS. HE MUSED HOWEVER THAT PERHAPS COMELEC MIGHT ARRANGE TO HAVE A FIRE (THERE HAVE BEEN AN INORDINATE NUMBER OF
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MANILA FIRES OF SUSPICIOUS ORIGIN IN RECENT WEEKS) WHICH WOULD CONVENIENTLY DESTROY THE EVIDENCE.

3. ROCES CLEARLY DID NOT REGARD THE LABAN AS HAVING "LOST" THE ELECTION OR THE KBL AS HAVING "WON". EVEN IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD WHEN LABAN CANDIDATES WALK INTO A RESTAURANT, HE RECOUNTED, THEY ARE WARMLY

APPLAUDED. NOR WILL LABAN CANDIDATES CONCEDE VICTORY TO THE KBL (EXCLUDING THE "DEFECTION" OF FELICISIMO CABIGAO). HE STATED THAT THE GOP HAD OFFERED SEVERAL LABAN CANDIDATES UP TO ONE MILLION PESOS EACH TO PUBLICLY CONCEDE VICTORY TO THE KBL. THERE WAS NO TAKERS.

4. COMMENT: ROCES' THEME OF "FIGHT ON", THROUGH LEGAL AND OTHER NON-VIOLENT MEANS, MAY FAIRLY WELL REPRESENT CURRENT LABAN ATTITUDES IN THE WAKE OF THE ELECTIONS. IN THEIR EFFORTS TO GAIN A MEANINGFUL INVESTIGATION OF ELECTORAL ANOMALIES, LABAN HAS SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM CARDINAL SIN AND OTHER CHURCH ELEMENTS. HOWEVER, WHETHER THIS IS SUFFICIENT TO INDUCE THE GOP TO CONDUCT AN HONEST POST-MORTEM IS DUBIOUS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT MARCOS AND THE COMELEC WOULD NOT BE HESITANT TO TAKE STEPS (INCLUDING FIRES IF NECESSARY) TO KEEP THE SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET. STULL

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Message Attributes

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